



Establishing the SET programme as a 'centre for global knowledge' on economic transformation

Achievements to date

SUMMARY

One core objective of the Supporting Economic Transformation (SET) programme has been to establish the programme as a 'centre for global knowledge' on economic transformation and make a significant contribution to academic and policy debates on the best ways to achieve it in practice.

This impact case study explores how SET has achieved these aims through:

- Producing high-quality, **in-depth, comparative and thematic analyses** on topics related to economic transformation, including on gender, digitalisation, manufacturing, services, trade and macroeconomics, which has generated uptake by key audiences
- forging sustainable **partnerships with in-country organisations**, such as the African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET), Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), Peking University, the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) and REPOA in Tanzania
- **convening globally renowned economists and policy experts** such as Dani Rodrik, Helen Hai, Louise Fox, John Page, and Adair Turner at public events and high-level workshops in London and in developing countries
- engaging **ministers from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Rwanda and Tanzania** with SET analysis and policy advice
- disseminating research findings and policy recommendations effectively, achieving **over 200 mentions in national and international media outlets** (TV, print and online) including the Financial Times, the Economist, Africa Business Magazine and local media
- influencing the analysis of international organisations (e.g. AfDB, World Bank, UNECA, UNIDO, IGC) other research outlets and prominent economists, evidenced by **direct citations of SET data, findings and recommendations**
- Inspiring donors to take up and engage with the findings for their own programmes of analysis (e.g. DFID's Invest Africa programme, Mastercard, SIDA)
- growing the SET programme's website into a centre for data and other information on economic transformation, evidenced by the figure of just under **150,000 tracked downloads** over three years.

IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS: CONTRIBUTING TO GLOBAL THINKING ON ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

Producing quality, in-depth, thematic and comparative analysis on topics relevant to contemporary debates on economic transformation is a core element of the SET programme. Topics covered by SET analysis include **gender, foreign direct investment, trade policy, manufacturing, services sectors, financing, macroeconomics** and **climate and environmental change**. In many cases, SET analysis has contributed to shaping global debate, and the work of other institutions and economists, such as in the case of the programme's flagship approach paper (see Box 1), and research on digitalisation in African manufacturing (see Box 2). Additionally, a firm-level survey of 640 Chinese manufacturing firms exploring responses to rising costs and appetite for investing abroad has challenged the prevailing narrative around the scale of Chinese manufacturing jobs likely to relocate to Africa in the coming decades, and was cited both in a recent piece from the Financial Times and on multiple occasions by renowned economist Justin Lin.

SET's ways of undertaking comparative and thematic analyses encompass many of the elements of the way the programme has established itself as a centre for global knowledge, that is, working with partners

Box 1: Supporting economic transformation: an approach paper

SET's [central anchor paper](#), laying out the programme's definition of economic transformation and approach to promoting it in developing countries, was developed over the course of the programme's inception phase, and launched at a [high-profile public event](#) hosted at ODI in March 2017. Panel speakers included Louise Fox, now Chief Economist at USAID and globally-renowned economist (and report co-author) Maggie McMillan.

The paper, and its unique approach to the study of the **what, why** and **how** of economic transformation (see diagram below) that brings together political economy analysis with sound diagnostic analysis and provides practical policy advice, has been **cited in academic publications** from the African Development Bank, Centre for Development Alternatives, Sheffield Political Economy Research Institute and others.

The programme's approach has also **contributed to the work of organisations in the wider development community**. The Tony Blair Institute, for instance, informed SET the approach paper was regularly referred to in their work. The paper also sparked engagement between SET and the Mastercard Foundation, who reached out to suggest a webinar for their staff based on SET's approach; SIDA, too, sought training from the SET team on their methodology and approach to in-country working. The approach has also been presented to international development partners UNIDO, UNCTAD, SOAS, the World Bank and the ILO. SET's approach additionally built connections between the programme and Gatsby Africa which led to a research partnership being developed (outside SET).

Finally, the paper also **influenced DFID**; it was cited in the recently published Invest Africa business case and was used by country offices in the development of inclusive growth diagnostics.



and disseminating effectively to achieve pickup in the media and uptake by other research outlets and prominent economists. A number of papers were produced in collaboration with international or local development partners, including the African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET) and New Climate Economy (NCE). SET's research (and other outputs) achieved over 200 hits in online and print media since 2014.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO EMBED SET ANALYSIS AND POLICY ADVICE

As part of striving for long-term sustainable impact, SET has worked from the beginning to **forge strong partnerships with other international development think tanks, research bodies and in-country think-tanks, private associations and senior policymakers**, firstly to strengthen analysis by encompassing different perspectives and secondly to encourage uptake of analysis and policy advice that will last beyond the end of the programme.

A select number of examples (by no means an exhaustive list) of SET's collaborative working with partners and high-level stakeholder engagement to share knowledge and influence are explored here. Additional examples not covered here include in-depth work with private associations the Kenya Association of Manufacturers to promote manufacturing on the political agenda and the Nigerian Economic Summit Group to produce analysis on local integration and backward integration in Nigeria.

Local think tanks

African Center for Economic Transformation

SET and [ACET](#) have been collaborating since October 2015 to support economic transformation efforts across African countries. This was done through a two-pronged approach – (i) producing high-quality, policy-focussed papers and comparative analysis, and (ii) convening meetings that bring together stakeholders to discuss how to promote manufacturing in Africa. ACET is known for its instrumental impact across the continent thanks to its excellent government and senior stakeholder links, and has seen significant capacity building gains, reflected by winning an [award](#) in 2018 for best (international) economic think tank.

SET support of the ACET-led African Transformation Forum (ATF), which took place in 2016 and 2018 and was attended by ministers and leaders from several African governments, placed the programme at the centre of policy debate on the continent. In 2018, SET was invited to lead a breakout [session on the role of manufacturing](#) in industrial policy, offering a platform for the dissemination of the programme's analysis and policy advice to senior policymakers in sub-Saharan African governments.



President of Rwanda Paul Kagame and SET Director Dirk Willem te Velde speaking at the African Transformation Forum Manufacturing Chapter session in Accra, Ghana, June 2018.

Tanzania: Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) and REPOA

SET has been working with Tanzanian think tanks REPOA and ESRF since 2015 as part of work to support the industrialisation process in the country. SET worked initially with REPOA to support the government's process of producing the second Five-Year Development Plan (FYDP II) 2016/17–2021/22, including to host a [consultative workshop](#) with the private sector in Dar es Salaam. SET later worked with ESRF in the process of analysis and monitoring the government's progress against the ambitious industrialisation goals laid out in the FYDP II, leading to the production of a paper, ['Recent progress towards industrialisation in](#)

[Tanzania](#)', exploring what has been achieved and challenges to further progress, which was published on both SET's and ESRF's websites. ESRF and SET also worked together to put together an [implementation workshop](#) for government and private sector actors following the launch of the FYDP II.

Development partners

World Bank

Through support to DFID, SET has influenced the work of the World Bank, improving the prioritisation of economic transformation in their country strategies. SET's work on this was heavily drawn upon by the World Bank, who agreed as a result to add a portfolio-level indicator in IDA18 discussions around economic transformation. Through his work, SET succeeded in influencing a key part of the international aid system. SET later took on another piece of work for the World Bank (also through DFID), evaluating their investments in infrastructure.

SET has also worked with World Bank offices in-country and has been cited in the World Bank's jobs diagnostics for Mozambique. SET hosted the [launch event](#) for the World Bank's research into the future of manufacturing-led development.

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

SET worked with UNECA to support two of their regional offices in preparing pilot diagnostics and country profiles. SET's guidance left a lasting impact on UNECA's work, and subsequent reports cite SET analysis extensively, showing how UNECA is using SET findings in its work moving forward.

CDC Group

SET engaged with the UK Government's development finance institution (DFI) CDC throughout the programme in various ways, seeking to support them in their investment decision-making by encouraging them to be more transformational.

SET invited CDC to an investment event with the Government of Liberia and the Liberian National Investment Commission in September 2017, which resulted in meaningful connections being forged between CDC and the Liberian government. CDC later attended and presented at a workshop held jointly in Nairobi by SET and the Kenyan Ministry of Industry on financing Kenya's textile, cotton and garment manufacturing firms. CDC were able to make new connections with garment firms, and put forward the challenges faced by DFIs when seeking sound investments in manufacturing. Five members of CDC staff also attended a meeting SET hosted in the House of Commons on the role of the City of London in Africa's development in February 2017.

As well as facilitating their participation in key events, SET produced a report targeted at DFIs such as CDC, providing guidance on how to evaluate the economic transformation potential of DFI investments., CDC colleagues reviewed and provided comments on the report.

Government policymakers

Nigeria

SET worked with DFID Nigeria to undertake analysis that would re-open the debate in the country as to Nigeria's industrialisation progress. The resulting report, 'Supporting economic transformation in Nigeria' was shared by DFID with figures in the ministries of both agriculture and industry, and later launched at a [high-profile event](#) in Abuja, at which the keynote speech was delivered by the federal Minister for State for the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The Minister confirmed that the report would provide great opportunity to consider reforms for creating jobs and improving prosperity in the country. The event also received positive, widespread coverage in the media, including on CNBC Africa.

Mozambique

SET engaged with senior Mozambique government officials through the launch of its study on economic transformation and job creation, produced in partnership with DFID Mozambique. The study was discussed in Maputo at targeted, high-level roundtable events that brought together the UK High Commissioner in Mozambique with the Minister of Economy and Finance, the Deputy Minister of Industry and Commerce, and other figures from across the government.



Left: Aisha Abubakar, Hon. Minister for State, Nigerian Ministry for Trade and Industry, delivering the keynote speech at the launch of SET's analysis on economic transformation in Nigeria, Abuja, May 2016. Right: Dirk Willem te Velde discussing job creation and economic transformation with Mozambique's Deputy Minister for Industry, Maputo, August 2017.

Nepal

SET analysis on promising sectors for inclusive job creation in Nepal achieved engagement at a high level through attendance and participation of Swarnim Wagle, Vice-Chair of the National Planning Commission at the launch event in Kathmandu. Wagle expressed his appreciation for the analysis and event, and interest in future work with the SET programme.

East Africa: Tanzania, Rwanda and Kenya

In Tanzania, engagement with the Minister for Finance and Planning on the country's Five-Year Development Plan has been ongoing since 2015, and more recently discussions have been had with the Vice President to drive action forward on key industrial projects. In Rwanda, the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Commerce has benefited from analysis on the manufacturing sector and guidance on investment appraisals, work culminating in a SET and Rwandan government jointly-hosted roundtable on next steps for Rwanda's transformation in September 2018. In Kenya, the government has engaged with SET work on numerous occasions and at different levels; officials from the Ministry of Industry have engaged with SET on the topic of services and financing manufacturing, senior advisors in the Office of the Presidency have worked closely with the programme to utilise analysis on MSMEs in manufacturing, and SET met the Cabinet Secretary for Trade (now for the East African Community) on the fringe of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings in London in 2018.



Left: Dirk Willem te Velde discussing SET's work with the Kenya Association of Manufacturers to develop a 10-point plan for manufacturing with the then-Cabinet Secretary for Trade, in London, April 2018. Right: SET team meeting with the Vice President of Tanzania, Minister for Finance and other trade and industry officials in Dar es Salaam, July 2018.

CONVENING EXPERTS

Convening world-leading experts, academics and senior policymakers to discuss developments and debates and new findings from SET analysis has helped establish the programme as a centre for knowledge and excellence in economic transformation. A number of public events, convening academic and policy experts, have been held at ODI's offices in London:

- June 2015 – [SET hosted Harvard professor Dani Rodrik](#) for a keynote speech on the future of economic transformation in developing countries (the [video](#) of which has been viewed over 2250 times on YouTube)
- November 2015 – [SET hosted Lord Adair Turner](#), former chairman of the Financial Services Authority, for a keynote speech on finance and inclusive economic transformation
- March 2017 – [SET convened speakers](#) including Louise Fox (Chief Economist, USAID) and Margaret McMillan (Associate Professor, Tufts University) to launch flagship approach paper
- August 2017 – [SET hosted Justin Lin](#), Director of Peking University's Institute for New Structural Economics, to deliver a keynote to launch his books on development cooperation and jumpstarting economic transformation

Additionally, SET has convened senior policymakers, private sector actors and in-country experts for targeted, private workshops in developing countries:

- [October 2015 \(Dar es Salaam\)](#) – SET and Tanzanian think tank REPOA hosted policymakers from the Ministry of Finance and Planning, private associations including the CEO's Roundtable and the Tanzanian Private Sector Foundation (TPSF) and others for a consultation workshop on the government's drafted Five-Year Development Plan for 2016/17-2021/22
- [October 2017 \(Kathmandu\)](#) – SET and Nepalese think tank South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE) hosted private manufacturing, ICT, tourism and agro-processing firms and associations and Nepalese Planning Commission Chair Swarmin Wagle at the launch of SET analysis on sectors for inclusive job creation
- July 2018 (Nairobi) – SET hosted senior figures from the Office of the Presidency, the Kenyan Ministry of Trade and Industry, MSMEs in manufacturing and development partners to discuss initial findings of SET analysis on MSMEs in value chains and SEZ plans.



Dani Rodrik delivering the keynote at an ODI public panel event, London, June 2015.

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT AND CITATIONS

Media hits

Over the course of the programme, SET analysis, commentary and events have received coverage from international and national media outlets across five continents, and across TV, radio, print and online platforms. Over **200 hits have been tracked** (a selection listed [online](#)) in print and online including in the Financial Times, the Economist, African Business Weekly, the East Africa, the Star (Kenya), the New Straits Times (Malaysia), the Kathmandu Post (Nepal), the Guardian (Tanzania), the Reporter (Ethiopia) and Rwanda Today, and TV including [BBC](#), [CNBC Africa](#), [Channel S \(Nigeria\)](#) and [Karoobar News \(Nepal\)](#). The papers that achieved significant pickup in the media are:

1. 'Digitalisation and the future of African manufacturing' (2018, 98 hits)
2. 'Economic transformation in Nigeria' and the launch event (2016, 21 hits)
3. 'Rising costs in Chinese light manufacturing: what opportunity for developing countries?' (2017, 18 hits).

Box 2: Digitalisation and the future of manufacturing in Africa

As part of a drive to explore beyond traditional manufacturing, SET undertook an analysis of indicators of digitalisation in sub-Saharan Africa and the likely impact of further digitalisation on African manufacturing. [The report](#) was launched at a [panel session](#) at the Global Development Network's conference in New Delhi, 'Science, Technology and Innovation for Development' in March 2018.

The launch was picked up by the global media, with over **95 hits in print and online media** including BBC Africa, East African Business Week, Business Ghana, La Vanguardia (Spain) and the New Straits Times (Malaysia), as well as radio segments on two BBC World Service programmes and a TV segment on Voice of America. The report, briefing and infographics were also republished in their entirety on the ILO's ['Technology@Work'](#) website, a platform for its initiative on the future of work.

Harvard scholar Dani Rodrik cited the paper in a recently study, ['New technologies, global value chains and developing economies'](#) for Oxford University's Pathways Commission, as did a study from the African Development Bank, and the paper also influenced a Mastercard Foundation (as yet unpublished) scoping paper on a new programme on the future of work.

Since publication, report lead author Karishma Banga has been invited to and presented the findings of the work at:

- UNCTAD's e-commerce week in Geneva (April 2018)
- UNECA, FES and OHCHR workshop on digital trade and human rights in Addis Ababa (May 2018) (following which, the report authors were commissioned for a chapter on the right to work for a joint publication with UNECA, due 2019)
- African Union e-commerce conference in Nairobi (June 2018)
- the WTO Public Forum in Geneva (October 2018).

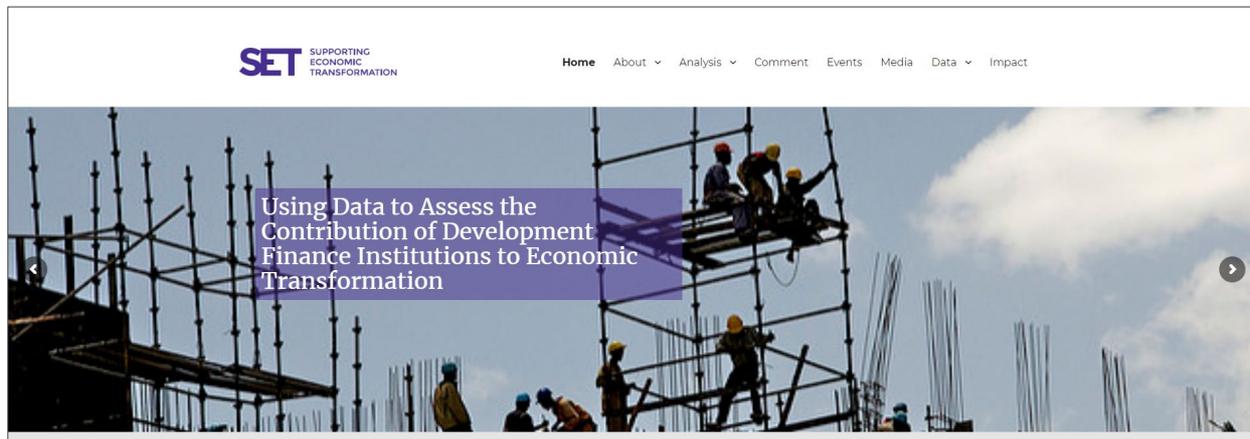
Citations

The programme has also tracked a number of citations of SET analysis in research papers from prominent economists, academic institutions and think tanks, as well as 'roundups' of recent research from organisations such as the DCED. Tracked citations total over 70 and include those in papers from the African Development Bank, the World Bank, Brookings, Oxford University, the Journal of Economic Integration, and Cambridge University's Journal of Demographic Economics.

As well as showing the reach and quality of SET analysis, citations such as those in programme proposals or business cases (for DFID's Invest Africa) also indicate the influence of analysis on the direction of future research.

SET'S WEBSITE AS A CENTRE FOR KNOWLEDGE

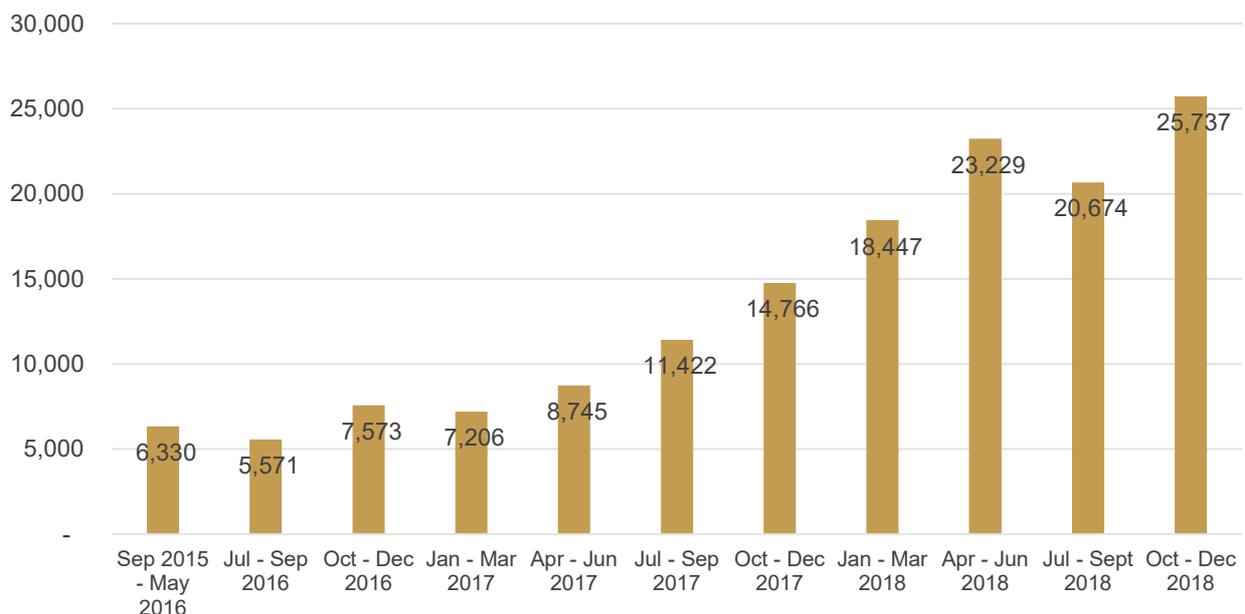
The SET programme's website was launched in 2015 with the aim of creating a dedicated space for research, comment, data and events on economic transformation for the programme's key audiences. Since its inception, the website's audience has grown exponentially, and downloads¹ of research, event reports and other documents from the site have also increased (see Figure 1). **Downloads over the course of 2018 reached 88,087**, more than twice 2017's total.



The SET website homepage.

The website has also been established as a source for **authoritative commentary on economic transformation** topics and developments in UK or developing-country policy, in the form of blogs. Expert economists including Morten Jerven and Gaaizen de Vries, former Permanent Secretary for Transport in Kenya Gerrishon Ikiara, and Made in Africa founder Helen Hai are amongst those who have produced SET online blogs.

Figure 1: Downloads from the SET website (September 2015–December 2018)



Note: Lack of data from pre-September 2015, as well as missing data between May and July 2016, means that the downloads presented here will be lower than the real total.

¹ By downloads we mean those of PDF documents hosted on the SET website, including research reports, briefings, event reports, and other event materials such as PowerPoint slides or agendas. This is not the same as website visitors or pageviews.